GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2369
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2015
Impact of Mining
Birla Shri Om

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large areas of forest land has been leased out for mining activities in the country;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the Government has conducted any evaluation of the loss of forest cover due to mining activities and the impact thereof on the environment, ecology and forest dwellers;
(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and
(e) the remedial measures taken thereon by the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (e) The Government of India grants prior approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to use forest land for the purpose for various development projects. During last three years including current year, the Central Government has accorded approvals over 1,24,133 ha of forest land for such development activities including mining. Forest areas for such activities are approved by the Central Government under Section 2 (ii) of the Forest (conservation) Act, 1980 with adequate environmental safeguards and afforestation measures in lieu of forest land proposed to be utilized for developmental activities. During the last two years and current year an area of about 78,301 ha has been prescribed for compensatory afforestation as part of environmental safeguards.

The Ministry, after examination of the proposals seeking diversion of forest land, recommends need based project specific studies to assess the impact of project activity on the flora and fauna in the area proposed to be diverted under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and accordingly recommends necessary environmental safeguards as additional conditions viz. project specific Wildlife Conservation Plan, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, additional compensatory afforestation, site specific soil conservation measures, specific studies on impact of project activities on flora and fauna, measures to facilitate wildlife movement across the roads and railway lines, detailed studies about the flora and fauna and their habitats. In addition to the aforementioned additional conditions, general and standard conditions whichinter-alia include raising of compensatory afforestation (CA), imposition of Net Present Value (NPV) to reduce the adverse impact, minimum tree felling, arrangement of alternate fuels, afforestation measures in the blanks within the forest area, phase wise mining operations, management of safety zone, reclamation of quarry, conservation of topsoil, preparation and implementation of Catchment Area Treatment Plan, Muck Disposal Plan, maintenance of prescribed Right of Way (RoW), plantation of dwarf species are also stipulated in the approvals granted by the Central Government.

The Central Government has also introduced the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015 in the Parliament. Purport of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of funds under the public accounts of each State and crediting thereto the monies received from the user agencies towards compensatory afforestation, additional compensatory afforestation, penal compensatory afforestation, net present value and all other amounts recovered from such agencies under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, constitution of an authority at national level and at each of the State and Union territory Administration of the funds and to utilise the monies so collected for undertaking artificial regeneration (plantation), assisted natural regeneration, protection of forest related infrastructure development, Green India Programme, wildlife protection and other related activities and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Bill has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 8th May, 2015 and has been referred to the Standing Committee of the Parliament for its examination.

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